DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 576 EC 303 209

TITLE	DEC Position on Early Intervention Services for Children Birth to Age Eight. Adopted: December 1993.
INSTITUTION	Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, VA. Div. for Early Childhood.
PUB DATE	14 Dec 93
NOTE	3p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agency Cooperation; *Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; *Early Childhood Education; *Early Intervention; Interdisciplinary Approach; National Organizations; Opinions; Parent School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Council for Exceptional Children

ABSTRACT

This brief (two page) official position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children addresses the issue of early intervention for young (ages birth to 8) children with disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at-risk for future developmental problems. DEC supports identification and service delivery to children at the earliest possible time consistent with family priorities. It believes that high quality early intervention can help ensure that all children reach their developmental potential. DEC urges the provision of early intervention and special education services in coordination with individual family concerns and priorities. It recognizes the need for educators to respect diverse cultural backgrounds and recommends that early services be delivered in inclusive and natural settings whenever possible. DEC supports the design and delivery of services that are interdisciplinary, interagency, coordinated, and collaborative. It believes that family needs are best met through use of a single service coordinator. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 372 576

THE DIVISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXECUTIVE OFFICES: 2500 BALDWICK ROAD, SUITE 15, PITTSBURGH, PA 15205
TELEPHONE: (412) 937-5430
FAX: (412) 937-7960

DEC POSITION ON EARLY INTERVENTION

The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children held their Annual Business Meeting at the DEC conference in San Diego. On December 14, 1993, the Division for Early Childhood adopted a DEC Statement on Early Intervention Services for Children Birth to Age Eight.

DEC POSITION ON EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE EIGHT

ADOPTED: DECEMBER, 1993

DEC strongly supports and encourages the identification of children with special needs and the delivery of services to those children at the earliest possible time consistent with the priorities of their families. Young children in need of early intervention services are those between birth and age eight who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at-risk for future developmental problems.

Our position is grounded in the belief that high quality early intervention can help ensure that all young children reach their full developmental potential; that they become valued and full participants in their families, schools and communities; and that their families benefit from consistent and supportive collaboration with service providers. This position finds support both in the professional literature which provides ample research evidence of the efficacy of early intervention for young children with special needs and their families, and in federal, state, and provincial policies that encourage and support early intervention and early childhood special education services.

DEC recognizes that the family is the constant in the life of the child. Early intervention and early childhood special education services should be designed in response to the concerns and priorities of each family related to the development of their child and should reflect a respect for each family's resources and values. Service providers must be aware of the diverse cultural context of the communities in which they work and must be competent to respond to families within the contexts of their cultures. Similarly, service systems should be designed so that they invite and support the participation of children representing the full range of diversity of the community - diversity not only of ethnicity, economics, and culture, but of ability, as well.

EC 303209

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. E. C.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

DEC has a strong preference for early services that are delivered in settings that are inclusive and natural. A natural setting is one in which the child would spend time had he or she not had a special need. DEC believes that there is a particular need to develop personnel standards that support the practice of serving all young children in natural and inclusive early childhood settings. While acknowledging that related service personnel, early childhood generalists, and early childhood special educators will require training within their particular disciplines, we believe that there is a common core of knowledge that such professionals should possess. Certification standards should be developed to ensure not only that early childhood special educators possess the high degree of specialization that their discipline requires, but also to guarantee that general early childhood educators possess the common core of knowledge and skills they need in order to work with young children with special needs in inclusive settings.

DEC is aware of the complex needs of the young child with a special need and of his or her family and supports the design and delivery of services that are interdisciplinary, interagency, coordinated, and collaborative. DEC recognizes the need for programs of preservice and inservice training to ensure that qualified personnel across a variety of disciplines are available in sufficient number to meet the needs of all children and families to use the collaborative approach that DEC supports and that the law requires. DEC believes that policy makers, institutions of higher learning, professional organizations and other sources of training and technical assistance, and of local service delivery systems share responsibility for ensuring that training needs are met and that families have access to the training they want and need.

DEC believes that the complex needs of each family are best met when each family has access to the services of a single service coordinator whose role it is to support the family in identifying and obtaining the services they want and choose from among the array of available services and who will, to the extent that each family desires, assist the family in obtaining the skills needed for themselves and their child during and beyond the early intervention period. All of the comments concerning the need for professionals who are adequate in both skill and number and who are culturally competent within their community contexts apply to the service coordinator. We believe that while members of each and all disciplines share with familiies a responsibility for advocacy on behalf of children with special needs, persons serving as service coordinators have a special responsibility to identify and work towards eliminating any gaps in the service system.

We believe that great strides have been and continue to be made toward meeting the needs of young children with special needs and their families. While appreciating and honoring the efforts resulting in these gains, we also recognize that many children and families remain unserved or underserved, and that ensuring that services are of the highest quality remains a challenge. We recognize the responsibility that DEC and its membership have in working toward early intervention services that are sufficient in both availability and quality to meet the needs of all young children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or who are at-risk.